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**How and why did the Americans get involved in Vietnam?**

In 1945 the Second World War ended. France had not been strong enough while being occupied by the Germans to keep the colony of Vietnam in stable condition. At this same time Japan and china had been at war and china was receiving supplies by rail from Haiphong in Vietnam. The Japanese ordered the French to close down the rail line and in 1940 the Japanese had occupied Haiphong. At this time France wasn’t in a position to resist Japans aggression. In 1941 France had agreed to let Japan occupy the rest of French Indo China. The reasoning behind this was the British were plotting against French rule and that the Japanese would by protecting it for the time being. The true reasoning behind this was that France could not put up a fight against japans strong army. Although the Japanese occupied French indo china they still allowed the French to run it as long as the Japanese could take whatever resources they needed form there war against china. The Japanese striped the area of all that they could and in about 2 million Vietnamese starved as a result of this.

In 1941 a man called Ho Chi Minh and Nguyen Vo Giap set up a league of independents for Vietnam and resistance against Japan. This was o golden opportunity because the Japanese had starved the Vietnamese so they were very desperate. Minh and Giap were communist. They were communist because Russia had agreed to help all communist countries free themselves. In 19 45 the Japanese decided to get rid of the French and the troops were disarmed. Japan then set up an independent Vietnam free of all French rule and appointed Bao Dia the emperor of Vietnam as its leader. This however did not prove effective as in august the Japanese surrendered and lost World War 2. In December of that year the French returned and deployed 50000 troops into indo china. The Vietnamese was not strong in the south and French commander Leclerc claimed victory by March 1946. The French could cover the area but they could not hold it down because of the jungle. Ho and the French came to an agreement on a cease fire but that was broken when the French launched a massive attack on the Vietnam forces in Haiphong. At this point the Americans had sympathized with the Vietnamese because they did not want to see the old colonial French back in power. In 1950 the Americans attitude towards the French had completely changed, the Americans are big anticommunist and because of the cold war with Russia they were terrified of communism spreading rite thru indo china. In 1950 after the Korean War broke out President Truman send the French 15 million dollars in supplies and said he would do whatever it took to help the French defeat Ho. In the next 4 years to follow the Americans would spent approximately 3 billion helping the French.

In the east the victory of Mao Zedongs communist forces against the Chinese in 1949 was a boost to the vietmih. This was another contribution to the Americans change towards the French because this victory seemed to be on open window for communism to sweep across South East Asia, and the French were doing all the fighting. BY 1950 Gaip commanded an army over 100 000 men that well armed with modern weapons and even trucks. The guerrillas were very successful because there were in the dense jungle and they could make their attacks on the French and then retreat back into the cover of the dense forest. In 1950 and 1951 Gaip made mistakes by moving from his style of guerrilla fighting to big style attacks on the French. On one of the attacks in 1951 50 kilometers north of Hanoi Gaip lost 14 000 of his guerrilla fighters.

Gaip wanted to take the French in a big battle and he chose to do so in a small village called Dien Bien Phu. Gaip secretly gathered 60 000 troops with 200 heavy artillery guns surrounding the French garrison, which was only occupied by 15 000 troops. Gaip used his heavy artillery guns to shell the French troops while the men dug tunnels to get them closer to the enemy lines. This hole process took two moths and on 7th of May 1954 the remaining 10 000 French troops most wounded could not hold the fort anymore and surrendered.

After the French had been defeated in Dien Bien Phu the asked the Americans to send troops to help them, and there was even rumor that nuclear weapons were involved. The Americans were in no position to help the French because they had just ended the Korean War were they lost 40 000 troops. They were not willing to see any more Americans die. In 1954 China, Brittan, Soviet Union, France, United States and Vietnam decided to meet in Geneva Switzerland. The American president Eisenhower wanted the French to continue fighting but the French had enough and could go on with the war. After the meeting they came up on some agreements and Vietnam was to be divided up along the 17th parallel, Ho Chi Minh to be leader of the north and the south under the rule of Ngo Dinh Diem.

American president Eisenhower feared that communism would have a domino effect on the Vietnam and it would be next on the list to be made fully communist. Eisenhower was determined to make communism stop at the 17 parallel. In 1955 Diem was elected president of Vietnam. The Americans would now support Diems government. Diem was not the honest of people and in his 1955 election out of the 400 000 people that were entitled to vote Diems got 602 000 votes and he had obviously cheated. Diems was able to pull all the strings of The Americans because they had no choice, it was either follow Diem or let the communist spread rite across indo china. Diems made a mistake because he made the peasants pay very high taxes which meant that there pay was very low. This was a advantage to the communist north because they could use this as a window because the peasants wanted to fight back against Diems government.

In 1959 the forces of the communist north vitamin ordered a terror campaign against Diems government after failing to hold election. Between 1959 and 1961 over 4000 South Vietnamese officials a year were being assassinated by the Vietcong which stood for the communist Vietnamese.

The Americans got involved in 1961 when Diem could not defeat the NLF because it was made

up of all sorts of people and Diem could not match in military strength with the NFL. After the NFL was established A month later John F Kennedy was elected as president of the united states of America and he did not want the American people to think he was easy on communists so he first sent between 700 and 3000 military advisers to help the south build up their forces. By 1963 there were 16 000 advisers. He also agreed to equip 20 000 troops as well. This brought the size of the army in the south to be 170 000 men strong. The issue of combat troops from Americans kept coming and by 1968 south Vietnam was occupied by 536 000 American troops. The big question was why couldn’t an army of 170 000 defeat 10 000 guerilla? In a battle about 60 kilometers from Saigon 300 Vietcong fighters were forced into battle against the Vietnamese and the effects were astonishing 5 American helicopters were shot down and 5 American crews were dead along with 60 Vietnamese troops. Only 3 Vietcong bodies were found dead.

At this time when the press questioned Kennedy he denied any involvement with the war atoll. In fact American forces were machine gunning Vietcong areas along with constantly bombing them from the air as well. The Americans realized that Diem was to unpopular to ge the peoples vote on reason for this was Diem was a catholic and he had promised good jobs in the government and army to Catholics but he failed to realize that the populate was more Buddhist than catholic and you had to get special permission from the government to practice any other religion.

Kennedy realized that Diem was to unpopular in Vietnam and a mission called The Coup D’Etat was launched. The Americans were going to over through Diem and his brother who was his chief adviser. In 1963 U.S troops surrounded Diem’s palace but no action was taken, this was done so it would allow Diem and his brother to escape the country without being killed. They escaped the palace and had agreed to be taken out of the country in an armored vehicle the next day and were shot dead. 3 months later Kennedy himself was assassinated and shot dead. The new government that took over after Diem only lasted 3 months. Johnson who was the next U.S president could not be easy on the communist either.

In the gulf of Tonkin South Vietnamese commandoes attacked north Vietnamese radar station in the gulf in the night of 31st July 1964. An American destroyer who was helping in the attacks by monitoring the enemy was approached by 3 North Vietnamese torpedo boats. The American ware ship which was called the Maddox open fired on them and the torpedo ship fired 3 torpedoes 2 of wick did not go of and one that hit and did minimal damage. President Johnson let this slide. The following night the ship claimed to have been attacked by torpedoes against and opened fire for four hours, none of the crew onboard never saw the enemy.

The Americans slowly edged their way into the Vietnam War and it was mostly driven by the people of America thinking that the government was being soft on the communist. This makes a war unwinnable because no man can go into another country into an unfamiliar surrounding and landscape and defeat a man that has been born and raised in that landscape all his life and knows nothing about anything else. Also there is a lot more to just a ware and fighting but also there are a lot of other background problem complications weather it’s a religion problem or what people believe in.